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SIGMA XI QUARTERLY

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

In sending a short series of names for the mailing list of the QUARTERLY a Secretary in a prominent chapter recently wrote as follows:

“This will make the third list this year I have sent to you, and these three take the place of those of last year. I have no doubt it is something of a bother to have these supplementary lists coming in so often but I do not see any way out of it. We have among our so-called “active” members, quite a number who apparently are not greatly interested. Since we have to pay the tax for the QUARTERLY on all we call active members, we have decided to consider only those as active who, early in the year, inform the Chapter of their desire to be so considered. By pursuing this method we have had a membership this year which is decidedly active and enthusiastic; all the dead ones are considered as if not members. This plan also enables us to carry on our activities with a legal quorum, which we did not always have before. But while this is well for the Chapter I can see that it might be something of a bother to the General Secretary. I trust it has not been too great a one.”

Another chapter secretary in writing speaks of “the enclosed copy of the list of contributing members of the.....chapter.” It is evident from this that the chapter has undertaken to make distinctions which the Constitution does not recognize and which have never been discussed much less authorized by any Convention so far as can be ascertained. It is difficult to see at a distance the

justification for such an independent action. Even though the situation be difficult to handle, it should be faced fairly by every chapter and the organic law of the Society upheld and enforced or repealed in the proper fashion.

The question of what constitutes membership in Sigma Xi is really a serious one for the organization but not at all with reference to the clerical difficulties for which the secretary quoted has made apology. The handling of such items involves a little larger payment for clerical services, but that is insignificant in comparison with the position and influence of the Society as well as the character and influence of its members which are vitally involved.

Every man who is elected to the organization takes at the time of his initiation the following pledge:

"Do you hereby pledge yourself to uphold the principles of the Society of the Sigma Xi, and assume the responsibilities incumbent upon active membership therein?"

It is fair to say that the new member has been granted an honor and privilege which would generally speaking lay upon him some responsibilities, but even were that not acknowledged he has publicly pledged his faith to the discharge of specific duties. How they are carried out is shown by the statement just quoted and by similar comments that have come from various other sources. The situation involves a real handicap for the Society. More than one strong chapter finds the load enough to embarrass it in the discharge of its functions.

It will be recalled that in December 1915 the Minnesota Chapter presented to the Convention a proposed amendment to the Constitution reading as follows: "Active members of any chapter who are in arrears for dues for two years or more may, after due notification, be dropped from active membership by vote of the chapter; and the names of members so dropped shall be published in the SIGMA XI QUARTERLY." In the discussion aroused thereby abundant evidence was produced to show that the situation involved other chapters also. There was, of course, a general desire to act in the matter in such a way as to show the utmost consideration for the thoughtless members in so far as that could be done without sacrificing the interests and responsibilities of the Society. Accordingly, final action took the form indicated in the following amendment: "Any member in arrears for one year shall be duly notified of this fact by the secretary of the chapter, and in event of failure

to respond within six weeks *may* be suspended. On payment of arrearage he may be reinstated by vote of the chapter. If such reinstatement is not effected in one year his name shall be deleted from the rolls of the Society."

It would be valuable for chapters in general to learn of the results experienced in particular localities that have tried to carry out the provisions of this rule.

ALUMNI PRIVILEGES

This number of the *QUARTERLY* contains an article by a Sigma Xi alumnus who is now a college teacher and feels the need of relations to Sigma Xi influences. Part of the things he looks for can be accomplished under the terms of our present organization. The Constitution provides for the association of alumni members into alumni chapters and one powerful chapter has been organized under these conditions in the national capital. There is no reason why others might not be formed and accomplish effective work for the promotion of research in their particular localities as well as among the individual members of the organization. The relations of such chapters to the plan of President Stieglitz for Sigma Xi research fellowships are too evident to need special presentation here.

Perhaps the most feasible plan for such a small group as is discussed in this article is the organization of a Sigma Xi Club. One group of this type has been in existence at Duluth, Minnesota, for some time and its existence is chronicled in the *QUARTERLY* (vol. 3, p. 30). It will be recalled that the Executive Committee discussed such organizations and took action approving them specifically and urging the wide adoption of this plan of organization (see *QUARTERLY*, vol. 5, p. 83).

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The last edition of the Constitution was printed in the form approved by the Convention of December 1914. In this number of the *QUARTERLY* are included all amendments that have been adopted from that time to date. At the present moment only two amendments are pending (see *QUARTERLY*, vol. 6, p. 6). The amendments printed in this number will be reprinted and added to the edition of December 1914 to bring those copies up to date. The attention of chapters is called to the fact that copies of the Constitution can be secured gratis for distribution to members. Some chapters follow the desirable practice of giving a copy to each initiate.